

FOOD PROCESSING WORKFORCE

S
U
R
V
E
Y

RETURN BY FEBRUARY 7TH, 2002

Your participation in this survey will directly impact

- Industry education and training programs
- Employment and training support systems
- Development of industry skill standards

Thank You! Prepaid Postage is Provided

Eastern Washington Agriculture and Food Processing Partnership Project
For more information see their website at <http://www.co.yakima.wa.us/e&t/skills/SkillsMenu.htm>

For questions regarding this survey contact Paul Stern at the Northwest Policy Center: by email at sternpo@u.washington.edu or by phone at (206)528.4622

This project was made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Skills Shortages, Partnership Training/System Building Demonstration Grant SGA/DFA-102 to the Tri-Valley Workforce Development Council and administered by Yakima County as part of the Eastern Washington Agriculture and Food Processing Partnership.

Introduction

The Eastern Washington Agriculture and Food Processing Partnership* is working with the Northwest Policy Center at the University of Washington to conduct this survey for member companies regarding their workforce and training needs as well as use of skill standards at Food production plants/farms in the Northwest. Your participation is critical for the industry to develop quality education and training programs, build sustainability, and strengthen the retention of quality employees.

First, we would like to learn about how much difficulty you are having hiring and retaining skilled workers. In this survey, please include all employees in your responses whether full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract workers.

1. Overall how much difficulty would you say you are having hiring new workers for entry level occupations in your business?

1 Considerable difficulty

2 Moderate difficulty

3 No difficulty
2. Overall how much difficulty would you say you are having retaining entry level workers in your business?

1 Considerable difficulty

2 Moderate difficulty

3 No difficulty
3. Overall how much difficulty would you say you are having hiring new workers for skilled or semi-skilled occupations in your business?

1 Considerable difficulty

2 Moderate difficulty

3 No difficulty
4. Overall how much difficulty would you say you are having retaining skilled or semi-skilled workers in your business?

1 Considerable difficulty

2 Moderate difficulty

3 No difficulty

*Partners include Northwest Food Processors Association; WA Growers League; Teamster’s Union Local #760; IUOE Union Local #280; Wenatchee Valley College; Walla Walla Community College; Yakima Valley Community College; Big Bend Community College; Columbia Basin College; Tri-County WDC; North Central WDC; Eastern Washington Partnership WDC; Benton/Franklin WDC; Yakima Valley Opportunities Industrialization Center; The WA State Training and Education Coordinating Board. Other partners include Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Office of the Governor; Board of Yakima County Commissioners; WA Employment Security Department; WA Dept. of Agriculture; Office of Trade and Economic Development; and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

GLOSSARY OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

FOOD PROCESSING JOBS	JOB DESCRIPTION
a. Inspection/Sorter	Inspect raw products, inspect and pack processed products and maintain a clean and safe work environment using established specifications to assess the product and trim any major defects when appropriate.
b. Sanitation Worker	Handle chemicals, clean and maintain facility, transport material, and perform and document inspections to maintain a high standard of cleanliness throughout the food processing plant, especially where any raw or finished product is produced.
c. Laboratory Technician	Establish standard operating procedures, maintain facility, test material and product, perform and document analyses, and manage data to ensure that all products meet or exceed established operating parameters and/ or specifications.
d. Operator (Machine/ Process)	Process and package product, monitor and maintain process, and maintain documentation to ensure a smooth and efficient production of raw and/ or finished product in accordance with established specification and timelines.
e. Packaging Technician	Maintain all packaging equipment for efficient operation, implement repair and maintain programs for the packaging area, and have general knowledge of the main processing portion of the plant.
f. Ammonia Refrigeration	Implement predictive and preventive maintenance to ensure that production processes run smoothly and maintenance and repair meet operation needs; assist with equipment installation, customization or upgrading; identify, diagnose and repair equipment programs, and ensure safe use of equipment.
g. Boiler Operator	Diagnose, troubleshoot, overhaul and repair all equipment in the boiler area, maintain hourly readings of temperatures and pressures, and perform feed water and condenser water analysis as well as welding for repair and fabrication as required.
h. Electronics Technician	Identify, diagnose and/or repair equipment problems, ensure safe use of equipment in the workplace, coordinate implementation, operation and maintenance to ensure that production process runs smoothly, work with PLCs, and install new equipment.
i. PLC Technician	Analyze and troubleshoot equipment malfunctions, program plant PLC system and take corrective action to ensure proper operation, installation and configuration of PLC components.
j. Skilled Electrician	Possess Journeyman license and a thorough knowledge of applicable electrical and mechanical codes; install, repair, and maintain facility electrical equipment and systems and troubleshoot electrical distribution system and emergency power system.
k. Mechanic Level I	Successfully complete and apply safety assessments, follow food plant sanitation procedures, replace defective parts, and use manuals and power tools effectively
l. Skilled Mechanic Level II	Maintain safe, efficient operation of food manufacturing and packaging equipment; replace and/or repair defective parts or equipment using welding and fabrication skills, and read blueprints.
m. Skilled Mechanic Level III	Possess Journeyman level experience and the ability to plan, layout, install, repair and maintain production equipment, exhibit thorough knowledge of maintenance of a wide variety of powered equipment, and have knowledge of PLC applications.

29. Is there any other information you would like to share with us about any of the topics covered in this survey? (Please enclose additional sheets if this is not sufficient space for your reply.)

In case we have any questions about your responses, we'd like to ask:
30. Your Name: _____

31. Company: _____

32. Location: _____

33. Your Job Title: _____

34. Your Contact Telephone Number: _____

Would you like someone to contact you regarding industry skills standards? If yes, please provide the following contact information which will be sent to the association. (No other information you provide in this survey will be sent to them.)

35. Name _____

36. Company_____

37. Telephone number _____

5. For each of the occupations below, please circle the number indicating the degree of difficulty you are having hiring and retaining employees. (For a list of definitions of the occupations listed below, see the last page of this survey.)

		Hiring Employees			Retaining Employees		
Food Processing Jobs	Not Applicable	Considerable Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	No Difficulty	Considerable Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	No Difficulty
a. Inspection/Sorter	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
b. Sanitation Worker	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
c. Laboratory Technician	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
d. Operator (Machine/ Process)	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
e. Packaging Technician	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
f. Ammonia Refrigeration	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
g. Boiler Operator	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
h. Electronics Technician	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
i. PLC Technician	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
j. Skilled Electrician	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
k. Mechanic Level I	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
l. Skilled Mechanic Level II	0	1	2	3	1	2	3
m. Skilled Mechanic Level III	0	1	2	3	1	2	3

6. Are you having difficulty **hiring** other types of skilled or semi-skilled workers? (Please list those occupations below)

7. Are you having difficulty **retaining** other types of skilled or semi-skilled workers? (Please list those occupations below)

Next, we would like to learn about what you perceive to be the areas of greatest need for trained workers in the next 5 years.

8. For each of the following occupations, please let us know how you expect YOUR COMPANY’S demand for each occupation to change. By a “dramatic” change, we mean an increase or decrease Of 10% or more. (For a list of definitions of the occupations listed below, see the last page of this survey.)

Food Processing Jobs	Not Applicable	Increase Dramatically	Increase Somewhat	Stay the Same	Decrease Somewhat	Decrease Dramatically
a. Inspection/Sorter	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Sanitation Worker	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Laboratory Technician	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Operator (Machine/ Process)	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Packaging Technician	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Ammonia Refrigeration	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. Boiler Operator	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. Electronics Technician	0	1	2	3	4	5
i. PLC Technician	0	1	2	3	4	5
j. Skilled Electrician	0	1	2	3	4	5
k. Mechanic Level I	0	1	2	3	4	5
l. Skilled Mechanic Level II	0	1	2	3	4	5
m. Skilled Mechanic Level III	0	1	2	3	4	5

9. Are there other skilled or semi-skilled occupations where you anticipate dramatic (10% or more) growth over the next 5 years? If yes, which ones?

25. What is the major activity of your plant? This will be used to determine SIC/Industry classification.

- 01 Agriculture production crops
- 02 Agricultural production - livestock and animal specialties
- 07 Agricultural services
- 201 Meat products
- 202 Dairy products
- 203 Canned, frozen, and preserved fruits, vegetables and food specialties
- 204 Grain mill products
- 205 Bakery products
- 206 Sugar and confectionery products
- 207 Fats and oils
- 208 Beverages
- 209 Miscellaneous food preparations and kindred products.

26. Approximately what percent of your hourly workforce cannot **read** English at an adequate level? _____

27. Approximately what percent of your hourly workforce cannot **speak** English at an adequate level? _____

28. Is your workforce partially or fully unionized?

- 1 No, we have no unions
- 2 Yes, partially unionized
- 3 Yes, fully unionized

Finally, in order to understand the people and organizations responding to the survey, we have a few questions about you and your company. Please know that all information will be handled confidentially and that the information will only be published in summary form. At no time will we release information in such a way that you or your company’s identity will be revealed.

20. Is your plant a subsidiary of another company? If so, what is the name of the parent company? _____

21. How many employees are on the **year-round payroll** at this plant? _____

22. How many employees on the **year-round payroll** at this plant are **hourly employees**? _____

23. Approximately how many employees were on your payroll **at the peak of operations** in the last 12 months? _____

24. Approximately how many employees on your payroll **at the peak of operations** in the last 12 months were **hourly employees**? _____

10. What would you say is the **primary** source of your skilled or semi-skilled workforce? (Please pick the **one best** answer)

- 1 Training and promoting entry-level workers from within your business
- 2 Training and promoting entry-level workers from other locations owned by this company
- 3 Hiring students from high school vocational programs as they graduate
- 4 Hiring students from related community and technical college and private technical institute programs as they graduate
- 5 Hiring students from 4-year colleges and universities as they graduate
- 6 Hiring experienced workers from other employers in this industry
- 7 Hiring experienced workers from other industries
- 8 Off the street in response to advertising
- 9 Other: Please Describe

11. How do you advertise and attract workers for your skilled or semi-skilled job openings? For each of the following methods, please indicate if you use it frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never.

	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
a. Newspaper Advertising	1	2	3	4
b. Temp Agencies	1	2	3	4
c. Company Web Site	1	2	3	4
d. Trade Journal Advertising	1	2	3	4
e. Employee Referrals	1	2	3	4
f. Employment Center Advertising	1	2	3	4
g. Trade Associations	1	2	3	4
h. Temporary Visa Programs (H2A-H2B)	1	2	3	4
i. Plant Closures	1	2	3	4
j. Community based organizations that provide training	1	2	3	4
k. Internet Job Postings	1	2	3	4

12. Do you believe that the public image of the food processing and/ or agriculture industry significantly impairs your ability to recruit employees for your job openings?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Next, we would like more information about the kind of skills your current employees lack and the type of training you anticipate your future employees will need.

13. For each of the following generic skills that cross job categories, please indicate whether it is a skill that is an unmet need by your employees and if so, what type of training organization you would likely use.

				If an Unmet Need, Who will provide training?							
SKILLS	Not Needed	Need Currently Met	Unmet Need	On the Job Training	2 Year Coll.	4 Year Univ	Community Based Org.	Ind. Assn	Union	Suppliers and Vendors	Private Training Provider
a. Employability skills: punctuality, work ethic, personal integrity	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
b. General academic skills: reading, writing, math, computer, critical thinking	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
c. Communication with team members and/or customers	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
d. Cleaning and maintenance of equipment and work environment	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
e. Operation of production or inspection/test process	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
f. Administration/ record keeping/ quality control	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Next, we would like to know about your familiarity with skill standards for your industry.

14. Is your company familiar with industry skill standards?

- 1Yes
- 2No (SKIP TO QUESTION #20)

15. Are you (personally) familiar with the industry skill standards developed by ...

	Yes	No
a. Northwest Food Processors Association	1	2
b. Walla Walla Community College	1	2
c. Manufacturing Skill Standards Council	1	2

16. Have you seen a copy of the skill standards developed by the Northwest Food Processors Association?

- 1Yes
- 2No

17. Are you familiar with other skill standards **apart from** those developed by Northwest Food Processors Association, Walla Walla Community College, and MSSC? Which ones? If you know who developed them please indicate that as well.

18. How useful are industry skill standards in making personnel decisions?

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know
a. Employment	1	2	3	4
b. Pay	1	2	3	4
c. Employee performance	1	2	3	4
d. Training	1	2	3	4

19. Are there other ways you've found the skill standards to be useful to you or your company?